

lit. hist. v. 5

A N
E P I S T L E
T O

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

OCCASIONED BY HIS HAVING TRANSMITTED
THE MORAL WRITINGS
O F
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON,
T O
P A S C A L P A O L I,
GENERAL OF THE CORSICANS.

WITH A POSTSCRIPT, CONTAINING
THOUGHTS ON LIBERTY;
AND

A P A R A L L E L,
AFTER THE MANNER OF PLUTARCH,
BETWEEN THE
CELEBRATED PATRIOT OF CORTE,
A N D

J O H N W I L K E S, ESQ.
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MIDDLESEX.

B Y W. K. ESQ.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR FLETCHER AND ANDERSON, IN ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD.
MDCCLXVIII.

AN
R. P. I. S. T. L. E.

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED

OF THE MORAL WRITINGS

OF

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

TO

M. A. S. C. L. P. A. O. E.

GENERAL OF THE COMMISSION

WITH A PREFACE, CONTAINING

THE HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY



A. P. A. R. A. L. L. E. R.

AFTER THE MANNER OF SEVERAL

OTHERS

OF THE LIBRARY OF THE BISHOP OF LONDON

AND

JOHN WILKES, ESQ.

THE NEW ORIGIN, AND THE HISTORY OF THE

LIBRARY

OF THE

LIBRARY

OF THE

LIBRARY

OF THE

A P O L O G Y.

“ CRITICISM has so often given
“ occasion to the envious and ill-natured
“ of gratifying their malignity, that some
“ have thought it necessary to recommend
“ the virtue of candour without restriction,
“ and to preclude all future liberty of cen-
“ sure. Writers possessed with this opi-
“ nion, are continually enforcing civility
“ and decency, recommending to criticks
“ the proper diffidence of themselves, and
“ inculcating the veneration due to cele-
“ brated names.”

“ I am not of opinion that these professed
“ enemies of arrogance, and severity, have
“ much more benevolence or modesty than
“ the rest of mankind; or that they feel in
“ their own hearts, any other intentions
“ than

“ than to distinguish themselves by their
 “ softness and delicacy. Some are modest
 “ because they are timorous, and some are
 “ lavish of praise, because they hope to be
 “ repaid.”

“ There is indeed some tenderness due to
 “ living writers, when they attack none of
 “ those truths which are of importance to
 “ the happiness of mankind, and have com-
 “ mitted no other offence, than that of be-
 “ traying their own ignorance or dulness.
 “ I should think it cruelty to crush an in-
 “ sect, who had provoked me only by buz-
 “ zing in my ear, and would not willingly
 “ interrupt the dream of harmless stupi-
 “ dity, or destroy the jest which makes its
 “ author laugh. Yet I am far from think-
 “ ing this tenderness universally necessary ;
 “ for he that writes may be considered as a
 “ kind of general challenger, whom every
 “ one has a right to attack ; since he quits
 “ the common rank of life, steps forward
 “ beyond the lists, and offers his merit to
 “ the publick judgment. To commence
 “ author, is to claim praise, and no man can
 “ justly aspire to honour, but at the hazard
 “ of disgrace.”

“ The faults of a writer of acknow-
 “ ledged excellence, are more dangerous,
 “ because the influence of his example is
 “ more

“ more extensive ; and the interest of learn-
“ ing requires that they should be discover-
“ ed and stigmatized, before they have the
“ sanction of antiquity conferred on them,
“ and become precedents of indisputable
“ authority.”

“ The duty of *criticism* is neither to de-
“ preciate, nor dignify by partial represen-
“ tations, but to hold out the light of REA-
“ SON, *whatever it may discover* ; and to pro-
“ mulgate the determinations of TRUTH,
“ *whatever she shall dictate.*”

RAMBLER, N° XCIII.

more extensive and the interest of learn-
ing requires that they should be discover-
ed and organized, before they have the
reaction of antiquity centered on them,
and before precedents of indubitable
authority.

The time of the year is rather to be
chosen, and the day of the week is rather
to be chosen, but not the hour of the day.
For, as the day is the same, and the hour
is the same, the day and the hour are the
same, and the day and the hour are the
same.

A N
E P I S T L E

T O

JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ. &c.

S I R,

HAVING acquired a kind of friendship for the brave Corsicans, from the perusal of your interesting account of their situation, manners, and principles, I could not fail of being greatly affected by the mistake into which your zeal for the welfare of that heroic people, and the honour of Paoli, their general, seems precipitately to have hurried you.

The admiration which pursues celebrity, is indeed so very universal, that I am not surprized a veneration for illustrious names should prevail even to enthusiasm in young and unexperienced minds. Perhaps this veneration is no less amiable in its cause, than exceptionable in its effects. As it is generally corrected by age and observation, it were
B a pity,

a pity, therefore, to hurt a susceptible and ingenuous mind, by too rudely attempting to eradicate so natural a sentiment, while confined to the breast of the individual *. But when a public display of it renders its puerility conspicuous; when the sallies of youth and inexperience are obtruded on the world as the dictates of wisdom and understanding, it becomes a necessary, I will say a friendly task, to make a distinction between the giddy flights of a loose and bewildered fancy, and the sober researches of solid sense and profound penetration.

If those who exalt trifles by immoderate praise, are to be ranked among the perverters of reason and corrupters of the world, I am afraid you have not been sufficiently attentive to the general obligation of mankind to promote happiness and virtue, “in being careful not to mislead unwary minds, by appearing to set too high a value upon things by which no real excellence is conferred.”

I doubt not, Sir, that time and reflection will correct many of those mistaken notions you at present entertain of men and manners in general, as well as of your illustrious friends in particular; I

* For as the RAMBLER most accurately observes, N°. 122, “Experience soon shews us the tortuosities of imaginary rectitude, the complications of simplicity, and the asperities of smoothness.” It was for this reason some common friends were desirous of my suppressing the present epistle, observing of Mr. Boswell, as he tells us, the Corsicans did of a young French Marquis, who once like him visited their island, and gave himself prodigious airs of consequence; to all which those sensible people made no reply, but, beholding him with a smile of ridicule, said, “Let him alone, he is young *.” Our friends might be in the right, but the reasons above-mentioned prevailed.

* See Tour to Corsica, first edition, page 316.

should therefore have spared both you and myself the trouble of this address, had the propagation of such notions been confined to the circle of your personal acquaintance. But when we see them disseminated in printed books throughout Europe; when we see the morals, and consequently the political happiness of a whole nation endangered by your indiscreet and officious endeavours to promote their unnecessary reformation; who can withhold remonstrance! *Quum tota insula periclitatur, non ex-postulemus? non accusemus? non graviter feramus?* — Truth, justice, humanity forbid it.

You have been pleased to assure the world, that the Corsicans are arrived at that “ period in the “ progress of society, in which mankind appear to “ the greatest advantage.” You have been pleased to tell us, “ they are bold, active, steady, ardent “ in the love of liberty and their native country : “ that their manners are simple, their social affec- “ tions warm, and though they are greatly influ- “ enced by the ties of blood, yet they are generous, “ hospitable, and religious *.”

Of the character and sentiments of their illustrious chief, you give us also an idea, worthy the leader of such a nation; a nation composed of men of “ honour, sense and abilities.”

Little did I imagine a people so circumstanced, under the conduct of a chief so amiable and so enlightened, could stand in need of either the moral or political reveries of speculative theorists of other nations †? Yet are you farther pleased to inform

* See Tour to Corsica, first edit. p. 308.

† For as you justly observe, “ the natural and divine prerogatives of liberty need not the aid of logick, which has been

us, that diverted with the scanty library of the Corsican general, you have sent him over some English books in favour of *Liberty*; as also some of our *best books of Morality*, particularly the works of Mr. Samuel Johnson; whose name you revere, of whose sapience you are always mindful, and whom you magnificently stile a majestick teacher of moral and religious wisdom *!

Would to God, Sir, you had left the General's library as bare as you found it! or that you had timely considered the nature and tendency of the fatal gift you were going to make him!

It is natural to suppose, from the superlative regard you profess for the two celebrated personages just mentioned, that you intended your literary present should be as useful to the one as honourable to the other. You doubtless conceived the writings of our English philosopher would serve either to confirm, or inform, the mind of the Corsican patriot; and by his means to edify the minds, and improve the morals of the whole Corsican nation.

Had the principles of both been the same indeed, those of Paoli might be confirmed by a knowledge of their coincidence; presuming always on that Chief's implicit acceptation of the exalted character you gave him of Dr. Johnson. Nay, were they different, without being very essentially so, Paoli might possibly submit to be corrected by the more accurate judgment of a man, whose comprehensive and vigorous understanding, you could have

" so successfully employed by the advocates for slavery, to dark-
" en counsel by words without knowledge." Account of Corsica,
p. 199.

* See Tour to Corsica, p. 298. 33: 177.

assured him, has by long observation attained to a perfect knowledge of human nature *. But if, as it really happens, they should be found totally incompatible ; if neither Paoli nor his Corsicans can possibly adopt the sentiments of Dr. Johnson, without entirely divesting themselves of their own, they would by so doing, make the most perilous exchange imaginable. It is impossible to conceive how eventually fatal your well-intended gift may prove to that now happy country : for happy will I call a people, such as you have described the Corsicans ; a people possessed of every patriot and domestic virtue †, and glorying in the fairest prospects of a political happiness inferior to nothing but that which they now enjoy.

The inhabitants of more polished and luxurious countries may pique themselves on their enjoyment of a greater share of such happiness : but, their vanity deceives them ; and I may, on your own authority, safely venture to call the Corsicans the happiest nation in the world. In which case, I dread to think what may be the consequence of a total perversion of their present system of morals.

Better, far better might it have been for them, as a nation, that they had risked the contagion of a corporal plague, by the importation of a bale of cotton from Aleppo, than to catch the infection

* See *Tour to Corsica*, p. 330.

† They have indeed, tho' naturally humane, an unlucky custom of stabbing one another now and then, on suspicion of cuckoldom ; which custom, says Mr. Boswell, " may to some appear rude and barbarous ; but I hold it to be wise and noble. Better occasional murders, than frequent adulteries." See *Account of Corsica*, p. 133. and 217.

of a sentimental pestilence, by that of a bale of books from the port of London.

But, to wave declamation, and prove that my fears are not more imaginary than your inadvertency hath been real.

This cannot be more impartially effected, than by displaying the moral characters and sentiments of your two friends, the celebrated personages abovementioned, in a comparative point of view. I shall begin therefore with the Corsican chief, as described by your own pen.

MORAL CHARACTER AND SENTIMENTS OF PASCAL PAOLI.

1. His notions of morality are high and refined, such as become the father of a nation *.

2. He hath so noble a conception of virtue in theory, as to think it natural to the heart of man. "There is no man," says he, "who has not a horror at some vice: different vices and different virtues, have the strongest impression on different men: but VIRTUE IN THE ABSTRACT IS THE FOOD OF OUR HEARTS." Il virtù in astratto è il nutrimenti dei nostri cuori †.

3. He hath seldom deviated from virtue in practice: and that not from a defect of feeling or passion, but that his mind being filled with important

* See Tour to Corsica, p. 302.

† Ibid. p. 333.

objects, his passions have been employed in more noble pursuits than those of licentious pleasures *.

4. He possesses in the vigour of life, a rational and voluntary piety; relying so devoutly on his maker, that he never feels a moment of despondency †.

5. He is so justly satisfied with the dispensations of Providence, that he adores it for what it hath done, and reveres it for what it hath not done ‡.

6. He is every moment of his life a hero, and has a mind fitted for philosophical speculations, as well as for affairs of state §.

It is difficult to say more in favour of any man: the chief of a nation would have been made sufficiently illustrious by much less.

Of Dr. Johnson I shall speak, as he has spoken of himself and the rest of mankind; and as far as the contrast will admit, in his own words.

MORAL CHARACTER AND SENTIMENTS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.

1. His notions of morality are low and gross; such as would ill become a friar in a convent.

* See Tour to Corfica, p. 302.

† Ibid. p. 334—328.

‡ Ibid. p. 334.

§ Ibid. p. 329—306.

2. He hath so mean a conception of virtue in theory, as to think the little there is of it in the world, is chiefly the effect of human misery. So far from conceiving, with Paoli, that virtue is the food of our hearts, he describes mankind in general, as naturally prone to every vice; and as having no sense even of common justice, but what they acquire from their suffering by the injustice of one another *.

3. How often, he has deviated from the practice of virtue, he hath not told us; but he declares that the passions of mankind naturally lead them to licentious pleasures, and that their reason hath no authority over them, but by its power to warn them against evil; so that unless vice was checked by misery, it would swell to universal and unlimited dominion.—In a world like ours, says he, where our senses assault us, and our hearts betray us, we should pass on from crime to crime, heedless and remorseless, if misery did not stand in our way, and our own pains admonish us of our folly.—And again, If neither disease nor poverty were felt or dreaded, every one would sink down in idle sensuality, without any care of others or himself. To eat and drink, and lie down to sleep, would be the whole business of mankind!

4. He professes in the decline of life, such an irrational and slavish system of piety, that he describes the regular discharge of the duties of religion, as the constrained and involuntary occupation of infancy or dotage. In manhood, he tells us, religion and piety are neglected. None, says he,

* See the Idler, N^o. 89. from which all the following passages descriptive of this pretended philosopher's character are taken.

would have recourse to an invisible power, but that all other subjects had eluded their hopes. The gloom of age which intercepts our prospects of long enjoyment, forces us to fix our hopes on another state; and when we have contended with the tempests of life till our strength fails us, we fly at last to the shelter of religion.—Hence it is that he lives in a state of constant doubt, distrust and despondency.

5. He is so unjustly dissatisfied with the dispensations of providence, that he conceives the only thinking being of this globe, is doomed to think merely to be wretched, and to pass his time from youth to age in nothing but fearing or suffering calamities. Nay, he insinuates that the blessings of providence tend immediately to corrupt us; and affirms that none would fix their attention on a future state, but that they are discontented with the present.

6. He is at no time a hero, and has not a mind fitted either for philosophical speculations, or affairs of state.

Such is the patriot Paoli, and such the philosopher Johnson! What a contrast! * Surely, Sir, you must have been fascinated, not to have observed so striking a difference! A difference that prevails even to a total distortion in every feature!

* And yet Mr. Boswell regrets that two such illustrious men, such as humanity produces a few times in the revolution of many ages, should not be personally known to, and visit each other. What an idea, says he, may we not form of an interview between such a scholar and philosopher as Mr. Johnson, and such a legislator and general as Paoli! *Tour to Corsica*, Page 334.

But I leave you to dwell minutely on the comparison. That I may not be supposed, however, to have taken any unfair advantage of the desultory manner of an essayist, or to have misrepresented his principles by partial quotations; I shall transcribe the whole of the tract from which the above character and sentiments are deduced. This is the 89th number of the IDLER: which, being one of Dr. Johnson's latest performances, may reasonably be presumed the least exceptionable, as a test of his sentiments. In doing this, I shall take the liberty also of making some occasional remarks on the veracity, consistency and tendency of the positions advanced, so far as they are applicable either to Mr. Boswell, Dr. Johnson, Paoli or his Corsicans.

The IDLER, N° LXXXIX.

*“ How evil came into the world; for what reason
 “ it is that life is overspread with such boundless wa-
 “ rieties of misery; why the only thinking being of this
 “ globe is doomed to think merely to be wretched, and
 “ to pass his time from youth to age in fearing or in
 “ suffering calamities, is a question which philosophers
 “ have long asked, and which philosophy could never
 “ answer.”*

The reality of this miserable case, is yet piously taken for granted. But it is notorious that philosophers have been frequently employed in the investigation of causes, whose effects existed only in their own distempered imaginations.

Our Idler should therefore have proved, his insinuations true, viz. that man is the only thinking Being of this globe; and even then, that he was
 doomed

doomed to think merely to be wretched, before he had entered upon an enquiry, why or how he became so. The insinuation itself, however, is sufficient to give the reader some idea of the writer's temper and disposition, and to raise a suspicion at least that he may be one of that species of beings in human form, which he hath himself, not improperly marked out as the screech-owls of mankind *.

“RELIGION informs us that misery and sin were produced together. The depravation of human will was followed by a disorder of the harmony of nature; and by that providence which often places antidotes in the neighbourhood of poisons; vice was checked by misery, lest it should swell to universal and unlimited dominion.”

This question, which, we are told philosophers have so long asked, and philosophy could not answer, is here pretended to be solved by religion; I presume the christian religion, as revealed in the books of the old and new testament. To speak then as a christian, as well as a philosopher, I admit that the doctrine of original sin and its consequences are inculcated in those books †: but in the

* “These screech-owls seem to be settled in an opinion that the great business of life is to complain, and that they were born for no other purpose than to disturb the happiness of others, to lessen the little comforts, and shorten the short pleasures of our condition, by painful remembrances of the past, or melancholy prognosticks of the future; their only care is to crush the rising hope, to damp the kindling transport and allay the golden hours of gaiety with the hateful dross of grief and suspicion.” Reynolds could not draw a more striking likeness of his friend, than his friend hath here drawn of himself. See RAMBLER, N^o 59.

† Rousseau and others have thought, however, that this doctrine of original sin, is not to be found in the scriptures,

same books also are we told of the propitiation of a saviour, and of the ordinance of baptism; by which sacrament christians are delivered from original sin with its effects, and restored to their primitive innocence *. Whence then the necessity of human misery to check vice? of what use a disorder in the harmony of nature to attend the human will when no longer depraved? why should misery survive the sin that produced it? if we reason on the principles, and use the language, of religion, in laying down the premises of an argument; let us abide by them in drawing the conclusion. There is an essential distinction between *sin*, which according to divines, brought death and misery into the world †; and *vice* or immorality, which, according to the natural order of things, is universally its own punishment. For the guilt of *sin* God hath provided a Saviour. From the guilt of *vice* nothing can save but virtue. I will grant that adversity is sometimes a good preceptor; it may awaken the latent principles of virtue in the mind.

so clearly or so strictly expressed as the rhetorical Augustine, and other theologues have been pleased to maintain. *Rousseau's letter to the archbishop of Paris.*

* Should we even suppose, with Burnet, that the corruption and mortality of mankind, consequent to the fall of Adam, were the physical effect of the forbidden fruit; that aliment containing some poisonous juices, which proved destructive to the animal œconomy, by irritating the passions, debilitating the understanding, and diffusing principles of vice and mortality throughout the whole man. Even in this case, says Rousseau, the nature of the remedy being adapted to that of the disease, it is plain that baptism ought to have a physical operation on the body of man, by restoring to him the constitution he enjoyed in a state of innocence, and, if not the immortality dependent on it, at least all the moral effects of such a re-establishment of the animal œconomy. *Letter to the archbishop of Paris.*

† The forgiveness of which is expressly annexed to the right administration of the ordinance of baptism. See article 27 of the church of England.

But

But wretched is the sophistry of that writer who would insinuate that men are made virtuous only by being made miserable !

“ A state of innocence and happiness is so remote from all that we have ever seen, that though we can easily conceive it possible, and may therefore hope to attain it, yet our speculations upon it must be general and confused.”

The IDLER is certainly the first philosopher in the world that has founded the hope of attaining a thing merely on his being able to conceive the possibility of its existence. It is indeed very natural to suppose that our speculations on a state, so remote from all we have ever seen as only to be conceived possible, should be general and confused.

Amidst these general and confused speculations, however, he makes such a discovery as cannot fail to give his admirers the highest opinion of his talents for philosophical investigation.

“ We can discover that where there is universal innocence, there will probably be universal happiness; for why should afflictions be permitted to infest Beings who are not in danger of corruption from blessings, and where there is no use of terror nor cause of punishment ?”

This is a notable discovery indeed ! but let me be permitted to ask why innocence should probably infer happiness ? happiness is as naturally and universally annexed to virtue, as misery is entailed on vice ; but a state of Innocence is a neutral state between both, neither meriting the one nor demeriting the other.

His

His reason for the existence of such a state is also no less curious than his discovery of it. "Why should afflictions be permitted to infert beings who are not in danger of corruption from blessings?" Is not this plainly to insinuate that the blessings of providence tend to corrupt the heart of man; and that, if they did not, it were unreasonable for him to suffer its afflictions? What a strange insinuation!

"But in a world like ours, where our senses assault us, and our hearts betray us, we should pass on from crime to crime, heedless and remorseless, if misery did not stand in our way, and our own pains admonish us of our folly."

Surely, Sir, you never read this passage, or must have totally forgot it, when you laboured to persuade Paoli, that Dr. Johnson entertained a moral sense of distinction between virtue and vice; telling him he once facetiously said to you, that "when a man who has no sense of such distinction leaves our houses, we should count our spoons*!" It appears, however, incontestible from the last quoted

* There is so singular a species of pleasantry in Mr. Boswell's account of his conversation with Paoli, concerning Dr. Johnson's bons-mots, that I cannot resist the temptation of copying it entire. "I repeated to Paoli several of Mr. Johnson's sayings, so remarkable for strong sense and original humour. I now recollect these two."

"When I told Mr. Johnson, that a certain author affected in conversation to maintain, that there was no distinction between virtue and vice," he said, 'Why, Sir, if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I see not what honour he can propose to himself from having the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, why Sir, when he leaves our houses let us count our spoons.'

"Of modern infidels and innovators," he said, 'Sir, these are all vain men, and will gratify themselves at any expence.
' Truth

passage, that if those prudent monitors, the whipping-post and the gallows, did not stand in the way, we ought to count our spoons when such men as the IDLER come into our houses, ay and our money too, before they go out of it.

“ Almost all the moral good which is left among us, is the apparent effect of physical evil.”

As the two qualifying words *almost* and *apparent* are introduced in this assertion, I shall make no other remark on it than to observe, the writer might on his own principles have reversed the terms

‘ Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity ; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull.’

“ I felt an elation of mind to see Paoli delighted with the sayings of Mr. Johnson, and to hear him translate them with Italian energy to the Corsican heroes.”

What a pity that Mr. Boswell has not given us this translation, that we might have learned with what energy the Italians form an idea of going to milk the bull ! His readers might not then probably have had so much reason to regret his going so far himself on the same errand, and coming home after all a-dry.

“ I repeated Mr. Johnson’s sayings, continues Mr. Boswell, as nearly as I could, in his own peculiar forcible language, for which, prejudiced or little criticks have taken upon them to find fault with him. He is above making any answer to them, but I have found a sufficient answer in a general remark in one of his excellent papers.” ‘ Difference of thoughts will produce difference of language. He that thinks with more extent than another, will want words of larger meaning.’ Tour to Corsica, p. 335, 336. And I, Mr. Boswell, whatsoever enlarged ideas you may entertain of these polite phrases, have found a sufficient answer to every thing you can say in defence of their author, in another general remark in one of his excellent papers. “ It is not *folly* but *pride*, not *error* but *deceit*, which the world means to persecute, when it raises the full cry of NATURE to hunt down AFFECTATION.” Rambler, N^o. 20.

of it. For, if mankind are in danger of being corrupted by the blessings of Providence, as he insinuates, moral evil may also be called the effect of physical good.

“ Goodness is divided by divines into soberness, righteousness, and godliness. Let it be examined how each of these duties would be practised, if there were no physical evil to enforce it.”

I have already observed the impropriety of making use of the terms of different sciences in one and the same argument. The divines, who make the divisions here specified, would impute the regular practice of the duties mentioned rather to the operations of divine grace, than to the effects of physical evil. The IDLER shews himself therefore no better a Christian than a philosopher by such a motley mode of reasoning.

“ SOBRIETY, or temperance, is nothing but the forbearance of pleasure; and if pleasure was not followed by pain, who would forbear it? We see every hour those in whom the desire of present indulgence overpowers all sense of past, and all foresight of future misery. In a remission of the gout, the drunkard returns to his wine, and the glutton to his feast; and if neither disease nor poverty were felt or dreaded, every one would sink down in idle sensuality, without any care of others or himself. To eat and drink, and lie down to sleep, would be the whole business of mankind.”

What a picture of human nature! What a description of society! What a man must the IDLER be! And what company must he have kept! Surely the
the

the most dissolute, the most abandoned, the most beastly of mankind! For heaven's sake are all men drunkards and gluttons? Or ought the gratification of such vitiated appetites to be called by the general term pleasure, as opposed to pain *? How different an idea had your Genevan friend, of the decency and dignity of our nature. "The fundamental principle of all morality, says he, that on which I have reasoned in all my writings, is this; that man is naturally good; that he loves justice and order; that there is no original perversity in the human heart, and that the first emotions of nature are always right. I have shewn that the only passion which is born with man, to wit self-love, is in itself indifferent either to good or evil; that it becomes good or evil only by those adventitious circumstances in which it is dis-

* Is there that fordid creature on earth, says Shaftesbury, who does not prize his own enjoyment? Does not the frowardest, the most rancorous distempered creature do as much? Is not malice and cruelty of the highest relish with some natures? Is not a hoggish life the height of some men's wishes? You would not ask me surely to enumerate the several species of sensations, which men of certain tastes have adopted, and owned for their chief *pleasure* and delight! For with some men, even diseases have been thought valuable and worth the cherishing, merely for the pleasure found in allaying the ardour of an irritating sensation. *Characteristicks. The Moralists, part 2.*

Nothing can possibly be more absurd and injurious than to affirm those to be the universal passions of mankind, which are only such of some few depraved dispositions. No man is naturally either glutton or drunkard: on the contrary almost every man is at first averse to all kinds of excesses in eating or drinking, setting aside the consideration of their consequences; and it is only by acquiring a habit of vitiating his appetites, that he is enabled to do it with even present satisfaction. Men, by indulging themselves in such vices, gratify rather an habitual appetite than a natural one. The appetites of nature are hunger and thirst, the gratification of these gives real pleasure, nor doth temperance require us to forbear.

“ played. I have shewn that none of the vices
 “ imputed to the human heart are natural to it;
 “ and have described the manner in which man-
 “ kind, by successive deviations from their original
 “ goodness are become what they are *.”

There can be no doubt which is the more amiable description of humanity. And if you question which is the more just, I might refer you to the united evidence of the wisest and most celebrated philosophers both ancient and modern †. But perhaps the shocking caricaturas, which Dr. Johnson so frequently exhibits, of human nature, are not deduced from his actual observation of even the vilest class of people in any nation now in Christendom. Indeed I more than suspect these wretched daubings to be copied from the horrid anamorphoses of the lower antiquity, and to resemble the life just as the staring figures of its worm-eaten hangings, resemble the drawings of a Raphael or a Michael Angelo ‡. Your gloomy friend, I am told, pins his faith much on the primitive fathers. But the founders of the Christian church had in view the conversion of the heathen, at a time when unenlightened by Christianity, and unpolished by philosophy, they were sunk into brutality and bar-

* See Letter to the Archbishop of Paris.

† That a life of virtue is a life according to nature, has been the declaration of the wise in all ages. The reader will find a sufficient number of quotations to prove this, in the notes to Mr. Harris's excellent Treatise on Happiness.

‡ At least they resemble the description of a polished European in his present state, as would

— *Some fierce tyrant in old tapestry,*

Resemble the portrait of our most gracious sovereign, done by the pencil of a *Raphael*, or the still much more masterly hand of a
 DANCE.

barism. The fathers were very naturally led therefore to speak of human nature, as it appeared to them in such a state of unregeneracy. But what hath an age, in which genuine Christianity and true philosophy are cultivated, as at present, to do with such vile, such abominable misrepresentations?

“ *RIGHTEOUSNESS, or the system of social duty, may be subdivided into justice and charity. Of justice, one of the heathen sages has shewn with great acuteness, that it was impressed upon mankind only by the inconveniences which injustice had produced. In the first ages, says he, men acted without any rule but the impulse of desire they practised injustice upon others, and suffered it from others in their turn; but in time it was discovered, that the pain of suffering wrong was greater than the pleasure of doing it; and mankind, by a general compact, submitted to the restraint of laws, and resigned the pleasure to escape the pain.*”

Here again we see one of the sub-divisions, made by christian divines, of righteousness into justice and charity, enforced and explained by the opinion of a heathen sage; by whose great acuteness justice is shewn not to arise from any innate principle implanted in our nature, but to be a discovery made by reason and experience.

It were easier to confute a better logician than one who makes use of terms so vague, and argues with such notable inconsistency. Does the IDLER mean that a sense of the justice or injustice of any action, is primarily impressed on mankind, by the inconveniences they suffer from injustice *? Or

* May it not, indeed, be very reasonably asked, why the sense of justice should be deduced from injustice, rather than the

does he mean that *a knowledge* of the rules of justice necessary to be laid down between man and man, to regulate their actions in a state of society, are only thus deducible? If he only meant the latter, I should have no dispute with him; but when he insinuates with his ancient sage, that, because men, in the first ages of the world, acted without any rule but the impulse of desire, they practised injustice upon others; I cannot help being struck with the impropriety, and shocked at the injustice of such an imputation. Is human nature led by any natural impulse of desire to injustice? We have been repeatedly taught both by ancient and modern sages, that virtue in general is desirable on its own account merely from the immediate satisfaction it conveys; and that man is possessed of an internal sense, or feeling which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other *. Nay, doctor Johnson himself, in his 81st RAMBLER, declares that the measure of justice prescribed by christianity, is an universal principle, a law of which every man may find the exposition in his own breast †.

the sense of the latter from the former. Supposing them to be even relative terms, as sweet and sour; why must a taste of the sour precede the sweet any more than that of the sweet the sour? Cannot a thinking being reason as well from his sensations of pleasure as from those of pain? Or, if both are necessary to enable him to form an estimate of either, why should the latter be felt first any more than the former?—But we need not enter deep into metaphysical speculations to confute a moralist, who, the reader will see, hath most effectually confuted himself.

* See Hume on the Principles of Morals.

† Thus the brave Corsicans in the earliest ages, when they had acquired no better appellation than *barbarians*, are said by Diodorus Siculus to have shewn in every part of the oeconomy of

“ Of charity it is superfluous to observe that it could
 “ have no place, if there were no want; for of a virtue
 “ which could not be practised, the omission could not
 “ be culpable. Evil is not only the occasional but the
 “ efficient cause of charity; we are incited to the re-
 “ lief of misery, by the consciousness that we have the
 “ same nature with the sufferer, that we are in dan-
 “ ger of the same distresses, and may sometime implore
 “ the same assistance.

You will please to observe, Sir, that the IDLER introduces the word charity here confessedly in a theological sense; that is, as it is accepted by our divines; whereas in his comment on the practice of it he confines it solely to the practice of giving

of life, a remarkable regard to equity *.—But let us attend to the RAMBLER.

“ The measure of justice prescribed to us, in our transactions with others, is remarkably clear and comprehensive. *Whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.* A law, by which every claim of right may be immediately adjusted, as far as the private conscience requires to be informed; a law of which every man may find the exposition in his own breast, and which may always be observed without any other qualifications, than honesty of intention and purity of will. Over this law, indeed, some sons of sophistry have been subtle enough to throw mists, which have darkened their own eyes. To perplex this *universal principle*, they have enquired whether a man, conscious to himself of unreasonable wishes, be bound to gratify them in another. But surely there needed no long deliberation to conclude, that the desires, which are to be considered by us as the measure of right, must be such as we approve, and that we ought to pay no regard to those expectations in others, which we condemn in ourselves, and which, however they may intrude upon our imagination, we know it our duty to resist and suppress.”

* *Ἐν τε ταῖς ἄλλοις ταῖς ἐν βίῳ κατὰ μέρος οἰκονομίαις θαυμασῶς προτιμᾷσι τὸ δίκαιοπραγεῖν.*—Not that I have taken the trouble to turn to Diodorus; having borrowed this scrap of Greek, for the sake of dignifying the page, from Mr. Boswell; as I have done before in the text by a Latin exclamation from Petrus Cynæus, a modern Corsican author, with whom I am still less acquainted than with the ancient Sicilian,

alms. From this practice, however, it is notoriously distinguished by the apostle Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; where charity as a christian virtue is at large defined, and cannot without the greatest impropriety, if not impiety, be imputed, as to *its efficient cause*, to EVIL *. Indeed, Mr. Boswell, when your majestic teacher affects to talk again in the stile of christian divines, he ought to take the meaning of words rather of the rector of his parish, than the church-warden.

If he acquits himself but ill as a theologian in the beginning of the above passage, he is no less unsuccessful, as a philosopher in the close of it. "We are incited," says he, "to the relief of misery by the consciousness that we have the same nature with the sufferer, that we are in danger of the same distresses; and may sometime implore the same assistance." Now the motive inciting us to the relief of misery, is what we call *compassion*; which is here accounted for entirely on that selfish system, which has been so much railed at by some philosophers; who are thus spoken of by Dr. Johnson himself in the fourth number of his IDLER.

"*Compassion* is by some reasoners, on whom the

* Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Cor. 1. Ch. 13.

I should be glad to know which of the above qualifications charity deduces from physical evil.

" name

“ name of philosophers has been too easily conferred, resolved into an affection merely selfish.”

Now whether your friend chuses to relinquish or abide by the selfish system, you certainly must own him to be one of those reasoners, on whom the name of philosopher has been too easily conferred *.

Nothing but your partiality at least can possibly prevent it, when I quote the words immediately following; in which this *affection merely selfish*, is called “ an involuntary perception of pain at the
“ involuntary sight of a being like ourselves languishing in misery.”

Now the philosophers, who tell us we must renounce the theory which accounts for moral sentiments by the principle of *self-love*, adopt this very involuntary fellow-feeling for others. They call it not a selfish but a social affection, and affirm that the welfare of others, even on their own account is not indifferent to us. They do not represent compassion as a consciousness arising from a retrospect to ourselves, but allow that every thing which con-

* I shall not take on me here either to defend or oppose this selfish system, of which your friend seems to entertain such unsettled ideas. Mr. Hume observes, however, in favour of the philosophers, so severely censured in the last quotation; that “ Self-love is a principle in human nature of such extensive energy, and the interest of each individual is, in general, so closely connected with that of the community, that those philosophers were (at least) *excusable*, who fancied, that all our concern for the public, might be resolved into a concern for our own happiness and preservation.” *Hume on the principles of morals*, Sect. 5. part 2. See *Hutcheson and Ferguson on moral sentiment*. See also *Harris's dialogue concerning happiness*, part 2. on the coalition of private and public interest.

tributes to the happiness of others, recommends itself *directly* to our approbation and good-will.

“ ’Tis needless,” say they, to push our researches so far as to ask why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling for others. ’Tis sufficient, that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes; and there are, in every science, some general principles beyond which we cannot find any principle more general.”*

Whatever principles we adopt, however, they ought to be consistent with themselves; nor can he possibly have a mind fitted for philosophical speculations, who thus confounds the principles of others, and contradicts his own.

“ GODLINESS, or piety, is elevation of the mind towards the supreme being, and extension of the thoughts to another life. The other life is future, and the supreme being is invisible. None would have recourse to an invisible power, but that all other subjects had eluded their hopes. None would fix their attention upon the future, but that they are discontented with the present. If the senses were feasted with perpetual pleasure, they would always keep the mind in subjection. Reason has no authority over us, but by its power to warn us against evil.

IGNORANCE is even proverbially stiled the mother of devotion, and when joined to weakness, fear and melancholy has been called the parent of *superstition*. But never hath godliness or piety been

* See Hume on the principles of morals. Sect. 5. part. 2.

represented before as the joint offspring of doubt, discontent, and disappointment.

You will not forget that in the paper under consideration, the IDLER sets out with describing us as *thinking beings*. Even in the passage immediately before us, he speaks of man as a being composed of corporeal senses and of mind; viz. of sensual and intellectual appetites. As a mere sensitive being, man may indeed be supposed so sensual an animal, as to be capable of a total subjection to the pleasures of brutal nature. But *reason* is as much a part of him as *appetite*; the enjoyments also of the sensitive being and that of the intelligent, are as Rousseau justly observes, totally different. Reason never, therefore, can be so destitute of influence over a *thinking being*, as to be only capable of warning it against physical evil*.

* Or if it were, how doth this reduce virtue to a scheme of mere self-denial, as the IDLER represents it. "By self-denial," says a much more consistent writer, "we mean something like what follows. *Appetite* bids me eat; *Reason* bids me forbear.—If I obey reason, I deny appetite; and appetite being a part of myself, to deny it is a self-denial. What is true thus in luxury, is true also in other objects; is evident in matters of lucre, of power, of resentment, or whatever else we pursue by the dictate of any passion. To return then to our instance of luxury. *appetite* bids me eat; *reason* bids me forbear.—If I obey reason, I deny appetite.—And if I obey appetite, do I not deny reason? Can I act either way without rejecting one of them? And is not Reason a part of my self, as notoriously as appetite."

"Or to take another example. I have a deposit in my hands. *Avarice* bids me retain.—*Conscience* bids me restore. Is there not a reciprocal denial, let me obey which I will? And is not conscience a part of me, as truly as avarice? —POOR SELF indeed must be denied, take which party we will. But why should virtue be arraigned, of thwarting it more than vice her contrary. Make the most of the argu-

If you require farther conviction of the inconsistency of the IDLER, as to the pursuits and enjoyments of reasonable beings, attend to the voice of *Religion*, as delivered by the RAMBLER on the same subject. “ The proper tendency of every
 “ rational being, from the highest order of rap-
 “ tured seraphs, to the meanest ranks of men, is
 “ to rise incessantly from lower degrees of happi-
 “ ness to higher. They have each faculties assign-
 “ ed them for various order of delights.”—And
 again, “ the true enjoyments of a reasonable being,
 “ do not consist in unbounded indulgence or luxu-
 “ rious ease, in the tumult of passions, the lan-
 “ guor of indolence, or the flutter of light amuse-
 “ ments.”

“ SUPERSTITION”, says the same voice *, “ is
 “ the child of *discontent*, and her followers are
 “ *fear* and *sorrow*. Look round and survey the
 “ various beauties of the globe, which heaven has
 “ destined for the seat of human race, and consi-
 “ der whether a world thus exquisitely framed,
 “ could be meant for the abode of misery and pain.
 “ For what end has the lavish hand of providence
 “ diffused such innumerable objects of delight, but
 “ that all might rejoice in the privilege of exis-
 “ tence, and be filled with gratitude to the bene-
 “ ficent author of it? Thus to enjoy the blessings
 “ he has sent, is virtue and obedience; and to re-

“ ment, it can come but to this. If *self-denial* be an objection
 “ to *virtue*, so is it to *vice*.—If *self-denial* be no objection to
 “ *vice*, no more can it be to *virtue*. A wonderful and impor-
 “ tant conclusion indeed!”

Harris's dialogue on happiness.

* See RAMBLER, N^o. 44.

“ ject them merely as means of pleasure, is pitiable
 “ ignorance or absurd perverseness *.”

If the words which the RAMBLER hath here made to flow from the lips of *religion*, be the words of truth and soberness, and where is the man that does not feel their veracity? how pitiably ignorant, or absurdly perverse, must be the IDLER!—Dr. Johnson may chuse which appellation he likes best. As an amusing essayist, we may admire the elegance of his literary effusions, but, for consistency's sake, give him no more the title of a philosopher †.

† *Si sic omnia dixisset!* But, alas! this appears to be only the transitory effulgence of a lucid interval. How different from the same RAMBLER, when he exclaims, “ such is the emptiness
 “ of human enjoyment that we are always impatient of the
 “ present. Attainment is followed by neglect and possession by
 “ disgust; and the malicious remark of the Greek epigrammatist on marriage, may be applied to every other course of life,
 “ that its two days of happiness, are the first and the last.”

To groan beneath the load of life, and to complain against every thing in it, seems, indeed, to be the favourite amusement of this writer; an amusement which can as little excite the envy, as it deserves the compassion, of any other human creature. Tolerated as it might be in the cell of a monk, or the dungeon of a desperado, never should it be suffered to obscure the cheerful light of day, or infect the minds of social, benevolent Beings.

‡ The *critical* reader will observe, what I would have every reader do me the justice to think I intended, that almost all my quotations from Dr. Johnson, tend as much to do him honour as a *writer*, as to render him justly contemptible as a *philosopher*. If we except indeed the too frequent instances that occur in his writings of verbal affectation, it must be confessed that his style is for the most part nervous, splendid and masterly. Its terseness, however, is lost in amplification, and it wants that variety which the treatment of a diversity of subjects, absolutely requires. A mean object bedizened in the splendour of diction, is as ridiculous in the eye of propriety, as a soldier's trull accoutered

*“ In childhood, while our minds are yet unoccupied,
 “ religion is impressed upon them, and the first years of
 “ almost all who have been well educated, are passed
 “ in a regular discharge of the duties of piety.*

As the IDLER, in the preceding passage, gave the name of godliness, and piety, to confessed superstition, so here he has given the name of piety and religion to the ritual formalities of devotion, and the futile farce of hypocrisy. For children are at best but parrots in matters of religion. To talk of a child's regularly discharging his duty towards God, before it can form any idea of his existence and perfections, is to talk very unlike “ a
 “ man whose comprehensive and vigorous understanding has by long observation attained to a
 “ perfect knowledge of human nature.” Nothing can be more just than the following observations of Rousseau.

“ No education, says he, however truly christian, can confer on a child a degree of understanding above his years, or detach his ideas from material objects, from which even grown persons cannot detach theirs.—You may, indeed, make him repeat after you the words you dictate to him; you may also, if it be required, make him say he understands them: for that concession costs him little, and he had much rather say, he comprehends you, than be chid or beaten for want of apprehension *.” Thus children, as I

in the paraphernalia of a woman of quality. Yet the language of the RAMBLER, whether he treats of the joys of paradise, or the pastimes of a puppet-show, is ever flashing with the same brilliancy of metaphor; is ever labouring under the same pomposity of phrase, the same redundancy of words, the same roundness of period, and the same monotony of cadence.

* Letter to the archbishop of Paris.

observed, may be made hypocrites; but genuine piety can be practised only by persons of riper understandings. That this is most probably the case, appears also, from the IDLER's subsequent suggestion, that in youth and manhood nobody has any piety at all; which could hardly be the case, if true religion were really impressed on childhood.

*“ But as we advance forward into the crouds of
 “ life, innumerable delights sollicit our inclinations,
 “ and innumerable cares distract our attention; the
 “ time of youth is passed in noisy frolicks; manhood is
 “ led on from hope, to hope, from project to project;
 “ the dissoluteness of pleasure, the incbriation of suc-
 “ cess, the ardour of expectation, and the vehemence
 “ of competition, chain down the mind alike to the
 “ present scene, nor is it remembered how soon this
 “ mist of trifles must be scattered, and the bubbles that
 “ float upon the river of life, be lost for ever in the
 “ gulph of eternity.*

What an appearance of precision amidst this pretty farrago of metaphors! But it is merely verbal; the plain English of it being a false, scandalous and wicked libel on the most active and sensible part of mankind; for what else is it to declare that men in the prime of life, and the vigour of their understanding, are too much taken up with this world, to think at all of the next? Doubtless the cares and pleasures of the world engross too much the time and attention of many; but there are none whose business or amusements take up so much of either, as not to afford them both time and occasion for such reflection, as is of all others the most natural to a thinking being. Yet the IDLER goes on to say,

“ To

“ To this consideration scarce any man is awakened
 “ but by some pressing and resistless evil. The death
 “ of those from whom he derived his pleasures, or to
 “ whom he destined his possessions, some disease which
 “ shews him the vanity of all external acquisitions, or
 “ the gloom of age, which intercepts his prospect of
 “ long enjoyment, forces him to fix his hopes upon an-
 “ other state; and when he has contended with the
 “ tempests of life till his strength fails him, he flies at
 “ last to the shelter of religion.

And is this said in a christian country? in a na-
 tion of philosopheers? And that by a writer who
 affects to be both a christian and a philosopher! I
 blush to think it. Admit the regular discharge of
 religious duties to lay some kind of restraint on men
 engaged in business or pleasure, the yoke of chris-
 tian religion is easy, and its burthen light. Will
 nothing then but the most slavish motives compel
 us to bear them? Is there no man in the world,
 but Paoli, who in the tumult and uncertainty of
 human affairs, can repose a confidence in his maker,
 and pay a voluntary and religious reverence to the
 author and disposer of the various dispensations of
 providence? I am so far from thinking with the
 IDLER, that scarce any man does this; that I con-
 ceive there are few of those who deserve the name
 of thinking beings, who do not.

“ That misery does not make all virtuous, experi-
 “ ence too certainly informs us; but it is no less cer-
 “ tain that of what virtue there is, misery produces far
 “ the greater part.

This passage seems intended only as a forcible
 repetition of the writer's former assertion, that al-
 most all the moral good which is left among us,
 is

is the effect of physical evil. A true philosopher, however, would have made a distinction between moral good and virtue; the former relating more immediately to the merit of an action, and the latter to that of the agent: so that though the former assertion should be admitted, the latter may still be false.

We come now to the inference, drawn from the above curious chain of philosophical reasoning.

“ Physical evil may be therefore endured with patience, since it is the cause of moral good; and patience itself is one virtue by which we are prepared for that state in which evil shall be no more.

What an incentive this to the virtue of patience! If physical evil be the cause of moral good, the effect cannot be greater than the cause. Add to this, that in a world so wicked as the IDLER describes it, moral good is desirable only on account of the physical good attending it. What motive then hath any individual to adopt the virtue of patience, unless reason be given him to think the physical good resulting to him from the virtue of his fellow creatures, will indemnify him for the physical evil he must suffer from their vices, and in the ordinary course of nature.

Oh! but the IDLER says, “ patience is a virtue by which we are prepared for that state in which evil shall be no more.”

What an idea must a writer entertain of a future state of happiness, who supposes the virtue of patience requisite to render us capable of enduring it! It had certainly been more philosophical to have

have supposed patience rather a proper preparative for our supporting a perpetual state of misery. It is indeed no wonder Dr. Johnson is so weary of this life, and so fearful of going to the Devil, when he seems to think a degree of patience necessary to enable him to live comfortably even in heaven!

What a disposition for a philosopher! What a system of christian philosophy! How different is this gloomy hypothesis, to that which a cotemporary writer hath deduced from the nature of man; confirmed by the concurring testimony of almost all the sages of antiquity.

Behold his description of it.

“ It is no meagre mortifying system of *self-denial*.—It suppresses no social and natural affections, nor takes away any social and natural relations.—It prescribes no abstinings, no forbearances *out of nature*; no gloomy, sad, and lonely rules of life, *without* which 'tis evident men may be as honest as *with*, and be infinitely more useful and worthy members of *society*.—It refuses no pleasure, not inconsistent with *temperance*.—It rejects no gain, not inconsistent with *justice*.—Universally, as far as *virtue* neither *forbids* nor *dissuades*, it endeavours to render life, even in the most *vulgar* acceptation, as chearful, joyous, and easy as possible *!”

And now, Sir, as I cannot suppose you ever read the Essay I have here reprinted, I make no

* Dialogue on Happiness.

doubt, you will be very ready to give up your friend Johnson as a philosopher and a moralist. Let us recur therefore to the part you have acted in transmitting the works of so superficial, so inconsistent, so unprofitable a writer, to the judicious and heroic leader of a sensible and flourishing nation.

If Paoli, indeed, be such as you have described him, I have not the least doubt, that on reading the 89th number of the IDLER, he will commit the Moral Works of Dr. Samuel Johnson to the flames, and issue an immediate prohibition against their ever being imported again into the island of Corsica. But as it may happen with him, as it has with you, that through a prepossession in their favour, he may diffuse such writings before he give them a critical reading; I own, I tremble for the poor Corsicans, when I think what is like to become of their present simplicity of manners, their warmth of social affection, their attachment to their kindred, their generosity, their hospitality, their religion! For what is the moral tendency of such writings but to render them deceitful, unsocial, undutiful, ungenerous, inhospitable and irreligious?

As they are in the hands of Providence, indeed, I shall only offer up on this account a short prayer.—May Heaven preserve the virtues you allow them, by averting the dreadful consequences of your inadvertency!

I cannot close my letter, however, without making some remarks on the political tendency of your gift. You tell us, that besides the Moral Writings of Dr. Johnson, you sent over our best books in

F

favour

favour of *Liberty*. But, let me ask to what end? You describe the Corsicans as already ardent in the love of liberty and their native country. Do you think them capable of being rendered more so, by the laboured reasonings of Harrington, Sidney, Trenchard or Gordon?—Paoli says, “ If a man
 “ would preserve the generous glow of patriotism,
 “ he must not reason too much.—Virtuous sen-
 “ ments and habits are beyond philosophical rea-
 “ sonings, which are not so strong, and are conti-
 “ nually varying. If all the professors in Europe
 “ were formed into one society, it would no doubt
 “ be a society of very respectable men, and we should
 “ be entertained with the best moral lessons. Yet
 “ I believe I should find more real virtue in a so-
 “ ciety of good peasants, in some little village,
 “ in the heart of our island. It might be said of
 “ these two societies, as was said of Demosthenes,
 “ and Themistocles, *Illius dicta hujus facta magis*
 “ *valebant* *.

Can you then wish, Sir, to be accessory to such an imposition on these brave people, and to tempt them thus to exchange the substance for the shadow? In a word, the only apology that can be offered is, that you conceived an addition to Paoli's English library, might be received as an acceptable return of civility; that it would afford him an elegant amusement, and might be the means of diffusing a taste for literature, and the polite arts among the people.

You might excusably be impatient for their improvement, and be willing to accelerate the fulfilling of his prediction. “ Come twenty or thir-

* Tour to Corsica, p. 324.

“ ty years hence, and we’ll shew you arts and sciences, and concerts, and assemblies, and fine ladies, and we’ll make you fall in love among us, Sir*.” You might I say, be reasonably enough willing to shorten this period, justly apprehensive that thirty years hence you might not be in a humour to revisit Corsica, or in a disposition, to fall in love with their fine ladies, if you did.

The only circumstance which you represent as disagreeable in the present situation of the Corsicans, is their living in a perpetual state of publick warfare with the Genoese. You appear to think they want nothing but *peace*, with its attendant improvements in the useful and polite arts, to compleat their political happiness.

But let us attend to what is advanced on this subject, by a philosopher of whom, you tell us, Paoli expressed an high admiration; I mean your friend Rousseau, already quoted, whom the Corsican general invited over, as another Solon, to assist him in drawing up a code of laws, for the use of his nation. And here let me congratulate these brave islanders, on observing, in your own account of them, that criterion of national prosperity, which the author of the social compact, affirms to be indisputable.

“ What, says he, is the end of political society?
 “ Doubtless the preservation and prosperity of its
 “ members. And what is the most certain sign or
 “ proof of these? Certainly it is their number and
 “ population. Let us not look elsewhere for this disputed proof; since it is plain that government must
 “ be the best, under which the citizens increase and

* Tour to Corsica, p. 300.

“ multiply most, supposing all other circumstances
 “ equal, and no foreigners naturalized, nor colo-
 “ nies introduced to cause such increase; and that,
 “ on the contrary, that government must be the
 “ worst under which *cæteris paribus*, the number
 “ of people should most diminish *.”

Now, Sir, you tells us that the Corsicans, notwithstanding their frequent losses in action, have in a few years increased sixteen thousand †. An increase much greater in proportion to their number, than has been experienced in other nations, where peace and commerce have afforded the utmost encouragement to all the arts.

“ It is on this principle of population, continues Rousseau, that we ought to judge of the
 “ several periods of time that merit the preference,
 “ in being distinguished for the prosperity of man-
 “ kind. We have in general, too much admired
 “ those, in which literature, and the fine arts have
 “ flourished, without investigating the secret causes
 “ of their cultivation, or duly considering their fatal effects, *id que apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset*. No, let interested writers say what they will, whenever the inhabitants of a country decrease, it is not true
 “ that all things go well, whatever be its external prosperity and splendour.—We should not
 “ so much regard the apparent repose of the world,
 “ and the tranquility of its governors, as the well
 “ being of whole nations, and particularly of the
 “ most populous states. A storm of hail may lay
 “ waste some few provinces, but it seldom causes
 “ a famine. Temporary tumults and civil wars

* Social Compact, book 3. chap. ix. and x.

† Account of Corsica, p. 133,

“ may give much disturbance to the administrators of government; but they do not constitute the real misfortunes of a people; who may even enjoy some respite, while their ministers are disputing who shall play the tyrant over them.”

“ It is from the permanent situation of a people, that their real prosperity or calamity must arise. When they all tamely submit to the yoke; then it is that all are perishing. Then it is that the ministry, destroying them at its ease, *ubi solitudinem facit pacem appellat.*”

“ When the intrigues of the French nobles had set the whole kingdom of France in an uproar, and the coadjutor of Paris carried a stiletto in his pocket to parliament; all this did not hinder the bulk of the nation from growing numerous, and enjoying themselves at ease. Ancient Greece flourished in the midst of the most cruel wars; human blood was split in torrents, and yet the country swarmed with inhabitants.”

“ It appears, says Machiavel, that in the midst of murders, proscriptions and civil wars, our republick became only the more powerful; the virtue of the citizens, their manners, their independence had a greater effect to strengthen it, than all its dissensions had to weaken it. A little agitation gives vigour to a state, and LIBERTY, not PEACE, is the real source of the prosperity of our species.”

And now, Sir, permit me to take my leave; flattering myself that your candour will induce you to lay hold of the earliest opportunity, to transmit a genuine copy of the present epistle to your friend
Pascal,

Pascal Paoli, general of the Corsicans. It is indeed but just that he should receive the antidote from the same hand, that incautiously administered the poison.

I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c. &c.

POST.

POSTSCRIPT.

IT may be expected, Sir, as you profess so ardent an ambition for literary fame, that I should on this occasion take some notice of your merit as an author. I have too great a regard, however, for those learned friends, whose names you have drawn up in battle array, in your preface, to pass any strictures on a work, which you tell us, they have *corrected*. I should otherwise have at least expressed some concern, that a gentleman so curious in the formation of language in its various modes *, should stoop so low, as to copy those trivial singularities in orthography, which not the authority of a voluminous dictionary in folio can recommend to one polite or elegant writer. I should be sorrow to rank Mr. Boswell among the *imitatores, servum pecus*, yet it had certainly well become him to have recovered a little of the English idiom, which he probably lost by his wandering among other languages, before he sat down to write the history of his peregrinations: he had well, I say, have learned the difference between Scotch and English,

* See Preface to the Account of Corfica, p. 19.

before he piqued himself, on his imitation of the illustrious Mr. Samuel Johnson, in the futile restoration of an useless *k* or an obsolete *u*. Could he have successfully imitated the verbosity, the pomposity, the scrupulosity, and the tortuosity of that admired and admirable writer, he might, indeed—but, I beg pardon, nobody can possibly form a truer idea of your performance, than you have given us yourself *, and therefore I drop this subject.

My chief reason, for taking up the pen again, is to prevent its being supposed, that I am more solicitous for the welfare of the Corsicans, than that of my own countrymen; who, it is thought by some, may be in as much danger of being infected by your writings, as the brave islanders under Paoli are by those of Dr. Johnson.

Your professed encomiums on private assassination, and your tacit approbation of the trial of criminals by torture †, are indeed circumstances in

* “ Writing a book, I have found, to be like building a house. A man forms a plan, and collects materials. He thinks he has enough to raise a large and stately edifice; but after he has arranged, compacted and polished, his work turns out to be a very small performance. The author, however, like the builder, knows how much labour his work has cost him; and therefore, estimates it at a much higher rate than other people think it deserves.” Preface, page 17.

† Mr. Boswell seems, indeed, to have so good an opinion of this salutary method of extorting confession from criminals, that he mentions an instance, in which, a poor despicable wretch of a servant, was made to become a *strong evidence* against his mistress, by having lighted matches held between his fingers. And yet he says, the wretch had wavered in his accusation; and that the lady spoke with great firmness, denying her guilt, and saying with a contemptuous smile, as she pointed to her servant, “ they can force that creature to say
“ what

in their own nature too shocking to the humanity and generosity of Englishmen, to make it necessary for me to say any thing against the absurdity and cruelty of such odious practices *. Large as the strides, and hasty as the progress, which injustice and despotism have lately made in the world, I flatter my-

“ what they please.”—But Mr. Boswell, I understand, is an *advocate*; it is no wonder, therefore, he should be for acquiring evidence rather by burning a culprit’s fingers than his own. See *Tour to Corsica*, p. 283.

As to the affair of assassination, he says, “ they who think “ duelling necessary to preserve the nice decorum of politeness, “ ought not to censure private revenge, the rough guardian “ of that virtue, which is the support of every community.”

Now, though I think duelling necessary to preserve the nice decorum of politeness, it is only because I think the one vice necessary to keep the other in countenance; they would otherwise have both been long since hissed out of the world, the one as absurd as the other is frivolous. In duelling, however, there is the appearance of courage, as in decorum the appearance of civility; both amiable qualities. But private revenge exhibits all the diabolical qualities of a wretch, who, like the devil, believes and trembles while he is perpetrating the most atrocious act of cruelty and cowardice. And this is the guardian of female virtue! I am not altogether of Fontenelle’s opinion; yet I should rather with my fellow countrymen all contented cuckolds and friendly cuckold makers, than such captious cowards as Corsican cut-throats.

* The advocates for this horrid custom pretend, that in Christian countries the criminal is not put to the torture, till such evidence appears against him as in England would amount to conviction, and incur sentence of death. But this is not true; the evidence is there taken privately, nor is the accused and accuser brought face to face in open court as in England, which makes an essential difference in the nature of evidence.—In the case cited by Mr. Boswell, the affair is still worse; for in this, one criminal is tortured to make him accuse another. Add to this, that the accused, a lady, is only charged with being accessory to the strangling a woman of whom she was jealous, and that in a country where, Mr. Boswell thinks, it is wise and noble for the men to assassinate their rivals with their own hands, on the same provocation. The ladies are obliged to him.

self, such barbarous notions will never prevail in England; but that murder, both publick and private, will ever be regarded with horror and detestation, by the conscientious, the christian, inhabitants of South-Britain.

It is otherwise with respect to your mistaken notions of LIBERTY; for which you profess the most laudable zeal. “*Liberty*, say you, is so natural and so dear to mankind, whether as individuals, or as members of society, that it is indispensibly necessary to our happiness. Every thing worthy arises from it.”—“*Liberty* is, indeed, the parent of felicity, of every noble virtue, and even of every art and science.*”

I am afraid, Sir, we go a little too far here. The arts and sciences have flourished in countries, to which liberty was at the same time a stranger. At least, if the arts and sciences be the natural offspring of liberty, they have generally proved very unnatural children of a most indulgent parent: for there are few countries in which they have flourished to any remarkable degree, which they have not in time, by their fomentation of vice and luxury, and the occasion they have given to the multiplicity, and uncertainty of the laws, betrayed into the most abject slavery†.

* See the Introduction to the Account of Corsica.

† For it is to be observed, that if the improvement of a people in the arts of government, viz. in making and enforcing laws, keep not pace with their advances in the arts of luxury, and their temptations to the breach of those laws, their ministers, being at a loss for constitutional expedients, will be apt to adopt the first that come to hand. There is, however, some little difference between governing a people and dragging them.

Will you object, that there is a difference between a parent and a nurse; that an art may be improved and flourish where it was not invented. I grant it. Necessity is notoriously the mother of invention: but between liberty and necessity, I hope I need not remark the difference.—Will you say, that a state of natural necessity, may be a state of political liberty? It may so, and almost as good a one, as that state of political liberty, in which the most useful part of society, are reduced to state of natural necessity.—But not to be too ludicrous on so serious a subject. I will readily admit every thing you say in favour of liberty, on condition you make no use of it to restrain its prerogatives.

“ There is no doubt, you say, but by entering
 “ into society, mankind voluntarily give up a part
 “ of their natural rights, and bind themselves to
 “ the obedience of laws, calculated for the general
 “ good. But we must distinguish between authority and oppression; between laws, and capri-

Not but that *military execution* is just such another rough political guardian of public liberty, as *assassination* is of private virtue. And if the one be wise and noble, as Mr. Boswell admits, with regard to individuals, the other may be so in respect to the public. If occasional murders are better than frequent adulteries, occasional massacres may be better than frequent tumults. “ Politicians, indeed, remark that no oppression is so heavy and lasting, as that which is inflicted by the perversion and exorbitance of legal authority. The robber may be seized, and the invader repelled whenever they are found; they who pretend no right but that of force, may by force be punished or suppressed. But when plunder bears the name of impost, and murder is perpetrated by a judicial sentence, fortune is intimidated, and wisdom confounded; resistance shrinks from an alliance with rebellion, and the villain remains secure in the robes of the magistrate.” Rambler, N^o. 148.

“ cious dictates ; and keeping the original inten-
 “ tion of government ever in view, we should
 “ take care that no more restraint be laid upon
 “ natural liberty, than what the necessities of so-
 “ ciety require *.”

So far all is well : and to this you might have
 added, that “ when the social compact is vio-
 “ lated, individuals recover their natural liberty
 “ and are re-invested with their original rights,
 “ by losing that conventional liberty, for the sake
 “ of which they had renounced them †.”

But you proceed ; “ perhaps the limits between
 “ the power of government, and the liberty of the
 “ people, should not be too strictly marked out.
 “ Men of taste reckon that picture hard, where
 “ the out-lines are so strong as to be clearly seen.
 “ They admire a piece of painting, where the co-
 “ lours are delicately blended, and the tints, which
 “ point out every particular object, are softened
 “ into each other, by an insensible gradation. So
 “ in a virtuous state, there should be such a mu-
 “ tual confidence between the government and the
 “ people, that the rights of each should not be
 “ expressly defined. But flagrant injustice, on one
 “ side or other, is not to be concealed ; and, with-
 “ out question it is the privilege of the side that
 “ is injured, to vindicate itself.”

As you have been in Italy, Sir, I shall not dis-
 pute your taste for painting ; there is beauty in
 the allusion. The fault is, it wants propriety.

* See Introduction to the Account of Corsica, p. 3.

† Social Compact, book I. chap. 6.

If instances of flagrant injustice, either in the administration of government or in the people, are to be resented by the party injured, I should think it would be better for both parties, that the limits of power in the one, and of liberty in the other, should be strictly marked out; by which means such flagrant instances might be prevented. It is much easier to prevent than amend; and perhaps there is no greater natural tendency or moral temptation to our trespassing on the rights of others, than their being left vague and indeterminate. We are seduced to take one step, because it is almost imperceptible to ourselves, and the next, because it may not be perceived by others, a third, because the two former were overlooked; and then we have proceeded far enough to think we have a right to maintain our ground. The reciprocal encroachments which are thus daily making by the government and the people, require a fixed and, if possible, invariable line to be drawn between them. "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," ought to be the language of the laws. For, as a very sensible Italian author justly observes, there is no exception to this general maxim, "every member of society should know when he is criminal, and when he is innocent *."

* Marquis Beccaria, author of a late Essay on Crimes and Punishments; who adds, that if arbitrary magistrates be necessary in any government, it proceeds from some fault in the constitution. The uncertainty of crimes, says he, hath sacrificed innumerable victims to the secret tyranny of discretionary judges.

Thus, if chastity were conceived in England, to be as Mr. Boswell tells us it is, that virtue which is the support of every community, I would have an act of parliament made, inflicting severe, if not capital punishments, on fornicators and adulterers; and not leave this support of the community, as it is left in Corsica, to the precarious guardian of private revenge. In like manner, if the publishing a libel, or a supposed outlaw's surrendering himself

It is the primary encroachments both on *liberty* and *authority* that ought to be checked, in order to prevent the one degenerating into *licentiousness*, and the other into *oppression*.

You would have the injured party vindicate itself, in cases of flagrant injustice; but, Sir, in cases of flagrant injustice on the part of government, how are the people to vindicate themselves? I know of no way but one, and that is a dreadful one. Will you say, with Rousseau, that the social compact is violated, and therefore the people are justified in the exertion of their natural rights?

himself to justice for having done so, be worse than capital crimes, they should be declared such by law; that the offender may know he is less intitled to lenity, than those who are charged with the perpetration of rapes and murders.

If the folly of printing and secreting an obscene poem, be worse than felony or treason, let it be declared so by law, and let the printer be hang'd, drawn and quartered. But shame upon every government in which men are left to do themselves justice; or in which so little care is taken to proportion punishments to crimes, as to give room for one man to suffer under the most rigid prosecution for a trifling offence, while another guilty of the most horrid crimes, may elude the hand of justice, by the good offices of a friendly judge. In every land of liberty, there should be promulgated a proportional punishment for every known crime. At the same time the power of every part of the legislature and administration should be determined and made known, that the people might neither plead ignorance, nor be ensnared into guilt. In countries where it is not so, but where crimes that are daily committed, are punishable at the discretion of stipendiary judges; where there are men, or bodies of men, either in a legislative or judicial capacity, who keep secret, or take upon them to determine at pleasure, their own privileges and prerogatives; in such countries, I say, the people, tho' free and licentious enough to be insolent to their prince, are enslaved by the tyranny of his and their own servants. They have not the honour of being slaves to a monarch; but are slaves to his slaves, and those sometimes the vilest of all his pensioned sycophants.

But

But grant the whole people are justifiable, with respect to government, reflect on the consequences of the want of government, in the mean time to individuals: reflect on the horrors attending an universal scene of anarchy and outrage. It will be said, perhaps, that in a general struggle between government and the people, it is soon ended;

——Concurritur—horæ.

Memento cita mors venit, aut victoria læta;

and that a momentary conflict however desperate, even for precarious liberty, is better than a slow and gradual descent, however peaceful, into confirmed slavery *. Be this granted; in any case the preservation of liberty, depends on the precise determination of the limits, between the privileges of the people, and the powers of government.

Another mistake, which you have made in the nature of liberty, and which might be fatal, if adopted in this country, is that the different orders of men, in every nation, considered as the constituent parts of a state, should never clash together. When a people indeed are projecting, to throw off a foreign yoke, as in the cases you mention of the Corsicans and the Hollanders *, it is undoubtedly necessary that they should not be at variance among each other. But you must not thence infer, because the Corsican signors and peasants, ought for the preservation of their liberty, to concur in a mode of government, to exclude the tyranny of

* *Malo periculosam libertatem quam quietum servitium.*

† Mr. Boswell mistakes however in the application of the motto *Frangimus si collidimur.* It did not regard the different orders of men, in any of the united provinces, but the general union of those provinces, as equals and equally concerned in repelling their cruel masters the Spaniards.

the Genoese, that therefore the preservation of national liberty, depends on a perfect coalition between the lords and commons of every other country. There are countries, in which the reciprocal jealousy subsisting between the several constituent parts of government, and their caution against the encroachments of each other, form the bulwark of the constitution. Their mutual jealousy, is their mutual security, and their occasional discord the constant guardian of public freedom.

HAVING thus, sir, very seriously taken you to task with regard to your mistaken notions in politics and morals, I must beg leave to have a word or two more with you, respecting your very singular penetration as to personal characters and the knowledge of mankind. But in this we will be less serious.

What, in the name of common sense, could induce you to hint at a parallel between two such heterogeneous beings as Pasquali Paoli and Samuel Johnson? How much more successfully might you have employed a talent for parallelizing, by making choice of a person equally popular, patriotic and enterprising. You can be at no loss to guess whom I mean. Indeed the similitude between Mr. Wilkes and General Paoli, is so very striking, that I cannot resist the inclination I feel to draw their comparison.

A PARALLEL BETWEEN PASCAL PAOLI, GENERAL OF THE CORSICANS, AND JOHN WILKES ESQ; MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MIDDLESEX *.

As to the two persons whom I have chosen to compare together, it may be observed in the first place, that they yield in patriotism and popularity, to few or none of those lawgivers, generals and heroes, which are usually the subject of Plutarch's enquiries.

With respect to their education, that of both has been liberal.

Mr. Boswell says of the general, "that he talked
" a great deal on history and on literature. I soon
" perceived that he was a fine classical scholar, that
" his mind was enriched with a variety of know-
" ledge, and that his conversation at meals was in-
" structive and entertaining. Before dinner he had
" spoken French †".

* As to those learned persons, who may expect, from what is promised in the title page, to find this comparison written strictly in the manner of Plutarch; I shall only beg leave to remind them of the old adage *fronti nulla fides*; and, if that be not satisfactory, to observe that it is said to be written *after*, not *in* the manner. To be caught *in the manner* is an absolute phrase, and I would rather the reader should take *after* to be an adverb of time or place than be guilty of it. In short, it was written, in both senses of the word, *after* the composition of Plutarch's last imitator, the Reverend Mr. Spence, who treading so proximately on the heels of his great master, *proxime, sed longo intervallo*, I presume I may without offense, and that without being a very happy imitator, be at least *proximus a prostrema*.

† Tour to Corsica, page 293.

All this may be said with the greatest truth of Mr. Wilkes; and I remember particularly that when I had one day the pleasure of dining with him, *before dinner he had spoken French* *.

Then again there is something extremely odd in each of them, in the beginning of their formation of an acquaintance. "In consequence of their being in continual danger from treachery and assassination, they have formed a habit of studiously observing every new face." Mr. Boswell assures us, that this is the case with Paoli; and I have observed it to be so true with regard to Mr. Wilkes, that when it has appeared there could be no danger from the parties, even when the ladies have visited him, he has been to a remarkable degree, though a bold man, studiously observant of every new face.

They are alike too in their condescension, their politeness, and the very gracious manner in which they receive compliments. I take Mr. Boswell's word for Paoli, and I appeal to the numerous assembly that were in Guildhall, during the late poll for city members, in regard to the singular politeness of Mr. Wilkes.

The success of Paoli, in acquiring such a power over the Corsicans, in the manner he has done, is very extraordinary; but the vast extent of Mr.

* I might mention another instance of similarity, were it not too trivial. But as Mr. Boswell thinks it of importance enough to observe that Paoli was dressed in green and gold, when he appeared so great at Sollacaro; I cannot forbear remarking that Mr. Wilkes, was also dressed in green and gold, when he was elected Member of Parliament for Middlesex, and made so popular an appearance at Brentford Butts.

Wilkes's power and popularity is absolutely amazing! Mr. Boswell observes, in the words of Thuanus, *sunt mobilia Corserum ingenia*; the disposition of the Corsicans are changeable. And yet, says he, after ten years, their attachment to Paoli, is as strong as at the first. Nay they have an enthusiastic admiration of him. *Questo grand' uomo mandato per dio a liberare la patria.* This great man whom God has sent to free our country! was the manner in which they expressed themselves to me concerning him.

Now no one can doubt that the disposition of the English is as changeable as the Corsicans; and yet after many years, their attachment to Mr. Wilkes, is as strong, or stronger than at first. And as to what his enthusiastic admirers say of him, I think it hardly decent or safe to repeat it. Mr. Boswell mentions it as a great thing that Paoli, surrounded by his guards, could restrain the impetuosity of the populace crowding to an audience. But what is this to Mr. Wilkes's influence over the populace; who when he was committed to prison by a court of law, was rescued by the people, and had authority enough over a multitudinous mob, to put in execution the otherwise ineffectual order of his judges, and to protect their officers from insult?

As it is natural for the enthusiastic admirers of any man to fall into absurd notions of his motives of action, so it is natural for the admirers of one man to fall into the same absurdities of another.

Thus, some of Mr. Wilkes's friends have supposed, as Mr. Boswell did of Paoli, that he had a soul superior to interest. But what was Paoli's
H 2 answer?

answer ? Even this.— “ It is not superior, said he,
 “ my interest is to gain a name. I know well that
 “ he who does good to his country will gain that :
 “ and I expect it *.”

Mr. Wilkes's heart grows big, like that of Paoli, when he talks of his countrymen. He seems desirous like him to settle the constitution of his country, and to wish for nothing so much, as to have an opportunity of convincing his fellow subjects, “ that the magistrates act with abilities and
 “ uprightness ; so that we may place that salutary
 “ confidence in our rulers, which is necessary for
 “ securing respect and stability to government †.”

In conversing on these subjects and particularly on the affairs of general warrants, he falls like Paoli, into frequent reveries, and breaks into fallies of the grandest and noblest enthusiasm. I recollect two instances of this, says Mr. Boswell, speaking of Paoli. “ What a thought ! that thousands owe
 “ their happiness to you !” then throwing himself into an attitude, as if he saw the lofty mountain of fame before him. “ There is my object (point-
 “ ing to the summit) if I fall, I fall at least there
 “ (pointing a good way up) *magnis tamen excidit*
 “ *au sis †.*” I remember to have observed something of the same kind once in Mr. Wilkes. “ What a decision !” says he (meaning that against General Warrants) “ thousands will
 “ owe their security to me !” then throwing himself back in his chair, as if he saw the post

* Tour to Corsica, p. 296.

† Ibid. p. 312.

‡ Ibid. p. 333.

on the pinnacle of fame vacant. “*There*, is my “object,” pointing as high as he could. “if I fail “I fail at least *there* :” pointing a good way lower down, to a post of honour too, tho’ not a *private station*!

It would be almost endless to particularize every instance of similarity in these two illustrious characters *. I shall proceed therefore to mention a circumstance in which they are not similar; which is Plutarch’s usual way too, as well as that of his imitators. The faculties of Mr. Wilkes’s mind are not so much concentrated in that single one of foresight, as Paoli’s are represented to be. Paoli is, according to Mr. Boswell, possessed of the gift, talent, or whatever you please to call it, of second sight. Whether he be the son of a seventh son, we are not informed, but the instances of his foreseeing future events, it is hinted are as numerous as the hairs on your head. On this subject I cannot help repeating the observation of that learned imitator of Plutarch whom I endeavour to imitate, *haud passibus equis*! “I doubt not, but that it is the same “with the faculties of the mind, as it is with

* Thus, though calm and fully master of himself, Paoli is animated with an extraordinary degree of vivacity.—He never feels a moment of despondency; the vivacity and versatility of his mind being amazing.—He is acquainted with the history of England and has even seen a North Briton.—He has not the conjugal virtues, &c. &c. all which mutatis mutandis will suit the English patriot as well as the Corsican.

It is true that Paoli has never yet been in the King’s-bench prison. But his predecessor King Theodore was, and that less honourably attended. Mr. Wilkes even in prison being attended in the same manner as Paoli in all his glory: viz. by a certain number of soldiers set continually guard on him, and his still closer guards of the Cerberian species that watch his chamber door. Tour, &c. p. 344.

“ the

“the limbs of the body, which ever is exercised much more than the rest. It is a common observation, and generally holds through the whole set, that a chairman’s legs will be more muscular in proportion than his arms ; and a rower’s arms more muscular than his legs *.” Just in the same manner if one man was to exercise his mental opticks, only in looking straight forward, as appears to be the case of Paoli †, while another constantly exercises his natural opticks in looking transversely, as in the case of Mr. Wilkes, it is no wonder that the one should acquire a foresight to an infinite degree beyond the other. Hence it is that while Paoli reads the events of futurity, it is not in the power of poor Mr. Wilkes to look right forward an inch beyond his nose.

Paoli prognosticates liberty and prosperity to his brave Corsicans after his decease ; Wilkes predicts nothing, but is in doubt what will become of the rights and privileges of Englishmen even while he is alive.

Paoli is a prophet as well as a patriot : Wilkes may be a patriot, but in that he is certainly no conjurer.

* See Spence’s parallel between Hill and Magliabechi.

† For, knowing so much as he does, his knowledge must be either intuitive or acquired by immediate apprehension ; since it does not appear that he is capable of study. *La testa mi rompa*, says he, if I study ten minutes. And this clears up a difficulty ; for otherwise how could he have a mind fitted for philosophical speculations, as Mr. Boswell assures us he has ?—Common men must study philosophy, but conjurers are philosophers of course.

On the whole, it is difficult to say which hath the greater merit. If the Corsicans have reaped advantages from the patriotic spirit and great talents of Paoli, so have the English from those of Mr. Wilkes; each appearing to have exerted such spirits and talents in a very extraordinary manner. But of the two, Mr. Wilkes is certainly the most enterprising patriot in England, and Paoli by much the one more fortunate in Corsica.

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C I N I 3